

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 115.

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 1854.

PRICE 1d.
STAMPED 2d.



THE FAIR EQUESTRIANS OF THE BUSH.

FRANK LAYTON: AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN AUSTRALIAN TOWNSHIP, AND THE STORE THEREIN.

"Few things," we are told by a graphic Australian penman, "momentarily perplex the associa-
No. 115, 1854.

tion of ideas in the mind of a newly-arrived inhabitant of old countries more than the first sight of an Australian township in its very earliest days. Where he expects to find streets and a throng of men, he often meets with no more than half-a-

L

dozen buildings of the most varied description, scattered without order and far apart; while, at times, he may watch the spot for an hour without seeing half-a-dozen persons."

The township of Boomerang (we borrow this name as an *alias*) was in the normal condition thus described. It might boast, probably, half-a-score of erections, from the lock-up or gaol, of solid logs, to the bark shed in which Mercy Matson's sleek, well-curried, and tractable little pony munched his corn and hay.

Among the more imposing structures at Boomerang was the store of Mr.—or, as Mr. Morris irreverently styled him, Rob—Matson. Not that the store was any great things either, in the way of architectural comeliness; for it was slab-built, bark-roofed, and rambling: that is, it covered a considerable area of ground, and was sufficiently supplied with wings of comparative magnitude enough to fly away with the whole concern, if it had not been well ballasted, or rather anchored, to the solid earth by the weight of Mr. Matson's stores, which occupied the entire centre and one of the wings of the building, leaving the other for the domestic and social uses of Mr. Matson and his daughter.

An inventory of the stock in trade of an Australian storekeeper in the bush would be a very comprehensive document; for there is scarcely a want, reasonable or unreasonable, which he is not expected to supply at a push. Ironmongery and cutlery; grocery and chandlery; drapery and haberdashery; hats, caps, and shoes; slop clothing for the men; ladies' gear; food for the hall and drugs for the sick. The catalogue is not exhausted; for he is, or should be, a universal dealer; a quick, ready, and shrewd barterer; a good judge of human-kind; not too trustful, nor too suspicious. He must know how to buy a hide and a skin, and of whom. He ought to be acquainted with the character of his neighbours, and the respective value of their drafts—the main currency of the bush. And, with all this knowledge, he must expect to be occasionally deceived; and knowing this, he will tell you that a cent. per cent. profit is fair, and fifty per cent. a losing trade, for he must live. And as he is not troubled with much opposition in his business, he does live an independent sort of life, and, as he tells you with a twinkling eye, perhaps he manages to make both ends meet—just.

The township of Boomerang did not certainly seem, or would not, to an uninitiated stranger, have seemed, a very promising field for commercial enterprise; but the stranger would have been mistaken. Mr. Matson had a wide scope for the development of his energies. If the country around was thinly populated, as indeed it was, it was not without inhabitants, and those inhabitants were not without wants; while not another store was to be found nearer than the next township, which was as far distant, probably, as Canterbury is from London; and, granting that the larger settlers obtained their annual stock of goods from Melbourne by their return drays, these stores required frequent intermediate replenishing, while other settlers, their wives and daughters, if they had them, together with shepherds, stockmen, mechanics, and other money-earning gentry, for

an almost incredible number of miles around, were occasional visitors at Rob Matson's store.

We should do injustice to this person if we attributed to him any undue regard to his own interests in his dealings with his neighbours. Instead of this, it was considered that he did not altogether improve his advantages as he might generally have done, by obtaining larger profits than those with which he was satisfied. He was not insensible, perhaps, to his own interests, nor by any means inactive; but shrewd observers might have said that he was not altogether cut out for a bush storekeeper. He was a man of middle age, grey-headed, and thoughtful; and an air of absence occasionally stole over him, even while completing a bargain or effecting a sale, which was now and then taken advantage of to his injury. It was noticed, too, that he seemed glad at all times to escape from the drudgery of his business, either by a smart canter into the surrounding wilds, or by withdrawing to the innermost recesses of his habitation.

At these and all other times, he would have been sadly at a loss but for the daughter of whom we have more than once spoken. Mercy Matson seemed indeed to be the presiding genius of the Boomerang store. She was lady directress, at any rate, of the miscellaneous establishment. She took orders with the gravity of a mercantile clerk, and saw to their execution with like carefulness and precision. She maintained astonishing command over the rough and independent bushmen with whom she was thus brought into contact; an equal and more constant control over the somewhat dissipated assistant storekeeper, who, for a consideration, condescended to tie himself down, as he said, to such low mechanical work when he might be doing a better thing for himself in the bush; and a mild and gentle influence over her father; to say nothing of the domestic rule vested in her hands.

And yet, no one could be more truly feminine, and, we may also add, naturally graceful, than was this storekeeper's daughter. Of the smallest, slightest form and lowest stature compatible with symmetrical womanhood, and with an open, trusting, loving countenance, and a voice alike mild and melodious, she seemed fitted for other and far different scenes and occupations; and when her tiny foot was in the stirrup of her pony Fairy, and she galloping, sometimes by her father's side, but oftener unattended, over the plains of Boomerang, she might have challenged the admiration of more polished spectators than any she was likely to attract there; and, at any rate, have been thought occupied more congenially with her own tastes than in looking over her father's ledger, or entering orders in his waste-book, or taming down a noisy customer. And yet even this might have admitted of a doubt.

CHAPTER XX.

THE STOREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER AT HUNTER'S CREEK.

ONE day, some months previous to the date of our story, as the two sisters, of Hunter's Creek, under the protection of Archibald Irving, whose brother's farm lay midway between that station and the township, were cantering their horses over the comparatively open ground which we have spoken

of as Boomerang plains, they were surprised by the apparition of an unknown damsel, whose equestrian appointments and surpassing gracefulness put to shame their more homely accoutrements. The young person was unattended, and, as she fearlessly galloped her diminutive pony over the uneven turf, they drew up to admire and wonder by what strange chance a being so unfitted, apparently, for roughing it in the bush, had suddenly appeared before them, and whence she had sprung. As she drew nearer to them, they put their horses once more in motion, and, meeting the youthful stranger, they received from her, as she rapidly passed, a lowly reverence; and shortly afterwards the vision disappeared behind a patch of bush, and for that time they saw her no more. The glance they had caught of her features in the quick transit showed a young and fair countenance, suffused with a glow of health, heightened by exercise, and perhaps also by a touch of native modesty; while a sparkle of humour seemed to lurk in the downcast glance of a clear, bright eye. The unexplained wonder served for some time to give food for conjecture.

A few weeks later, however, the young ladies of Hunter's Creek had, or thought they had, occasion to visit the store at Boomerang, which had lately changed proprietors. The route was sufficiently level for driving, and a light cart, driven by Mr. Bracy, in the early morning of a spring day, landed them safely at Rob Matson's door. To their scarcely concealed astonishment, they then discovered that the errant little beauty who had dwelt so much in their thoughts was none other than the storekeeper's daughter, whom they found, in a neat morning dress, ready to exhibit her father's stock in trade, and to take the orders of his customers. We dare not decide whether pleasure or disappointment predominated when this discovery was made. It was evident, however, that Mercy Matson was oppressed by no extraordinary sense of humiliation in being found engaged in so unromantic an occupation; indeed, an occasional gleam of humour flitting over her features seemed to repel, at every point, either the condescending notice, or the commiseration of the sisters. She was more than polite, however; she was perfectly well-bred; and, without familiarity, was so much at her ease that formality soon thawed. And, in truth, grades in society, and the *caste* feeling which draws such dark, black lines of demarcation between the wealthy land-owner and the mere shopkeeper, as well as between other ranks and classes in England, are and must be but slightly observed in the Australian colonies. It was natural enough, therefore, that three amiable and respectable young females, where congenial female society was almost unattainable, should soon be drawn together by mutual sympathy. Before Eleanor and Frances Bracy left the store, they and their father had been hospitably entertained; had found, with satisfaction, that, by some extraordinary means, the storekeeper's daughter had a cultivated mind, and tastes akin to their own; in her little room, they seemed almost to forget that they were not in their own snug retreat at Hunter's Creek; and, before they separated that day, an urgent and pressing invitation had been given to Mercy to pay a lengthened visit to their home.

The invitation had often been renewed, but never accepted. The young lady had so much to do at the store, she said, and her father could so ill spare her, that an occasional gallop on her little Fairy was the only recreation she was able to afford.

But when the tragical discovery was made which cast the shadow of a dark cloud over the generally cheerful countenances at Hunter's Creek, the storekeeper's daughter, frankly offering the service of her hand and skill, and the sympathy of her heart, mounted her little Fairy, and trotted by Mr. Bracy's side, as he returned homewards laden with such materials as the Boomerang store could muster for the outward manifestation of mental grief. She had thus been some days the welcome guest of the Bracys and the companion of the sorrow-stricken sisters.

"They are very beautiful," said Eleanor Bracy, with a sigh; "they seem so, spoken by you."

Mercy Matson had repeated from memory, and with pleasant melody, two or three stanzas written by one of England's noblest poets:—

"Oh, merciful One!

When men are farthest, then Thou art most near;
When friends pass by, my weakness shun,
Thy chariot I hear.

"Thy glorious face
Is beaming towards me; and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place—
And there is no more night.

"On my bended knee
I recognise thy purpose, clearly shown:
My vision thou hast dimm'd, that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

"I have nought to fear;
This darkness is the shadow of thy wing:
Beneath it, I am almost sacred; here
Can come no evil thing.

"Oh, I seem to stand
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath been,
Wrapped in the radiance of Thy sinless land,
Which eye hath never seen."

"It is very beautiful," said Eleanor again, with another sigh; "but——"

"But what?" whispered Mercy, looking up from the work she held in her hand, when she found that the sorrowing one left the sentence uncompleted.

"I do not know what I would have said; and it does not matter." And then followed a silence, broken only by the faint clicking of needles. At length, Eleanor threw down her work impatiently—almost angrily, and exclaimed: "I wonder at myself, that I should sit down here, night after night, at this hateful, hateful work, as if it could do *him* any good—poor, poor Archie!" and the pent-up feelings at length found a passage in sobs and tears.

"Ellen—dearest sister—I am glad they are come at last. I was afraid your heart would break without a sign of sorrow. You will be better for this; we shall all be better for it;" and, weeping in sympathy, Frances attempted, by sisterly caresses and endearing words, to soften and sooth her sister's violent grief.

But, for a time, vainly. These were the first tears Eleanor had shed since the news had been

broken to her. Day after day, in gloomy silence, she had mechanically performed her many and various engagements; had sought neither solitude nor society; had listened silently, and as though she heard it not, to the voice of affection; had acquiesced in every proposal with mute indifference; had received her visitors with a calm, placid smile: her outward seeming had been like the cold, hard crust which covers the fierce, volcanic, consuming fire beneath. But now, sorrow had found expression. "Better this," said her sister, "than that dreadful calmness;" and she was right.

"Oh, this is very foolish," said Eleanor, when the violent outburst was over. "I feel better now." And she resumed her occupation.

"Those words," she presently added—"they seemed beautiful; but they are only words."

"Words without meaning? Do you think that, Miss Bracy?"

"I suppose they have a meaning," replied the sufferer. "I dare say the poor old blind man who wrote them had a meaning of some sort; but perhaps it is best and safest to say that I do not understand them; it is most honest, at least."

It was a glance of commiseration—a full look of inquiry—which the guest and companion cast on the speaker. And, much as the sisters were pre-occupied by sorrowful thoughts and feelings, they could but notice how entirely, through the whole of this visit, the quick sparkling humour, which seemed to swim naturally in the eye of their new acquaintance, was vanished, and had given place to a soft but penetrating gaze. "I think," she said, quietly, "that when Milton wrote those words he must have had others still more beautiful in his mind and soul:—'This light affliction, which is but for a moment'—you know what follows, dear Miss Bracy?"

"I—I believe I must have heard; but I cannot say that I remember."

Once more the look of commiseration. Until that evening, Mercy had not ventured to touch upon the subject nearest her heart.

"What words, and whose, are they?" Frances asked.

"It was the apostle Paul who wrote them. Oh, you must have read them," she said, with animation; "but it is only when real trouble comes that we can feel them as we ought: and yet they are very beautiful, and very, very true. Only think how sweet it is to be able to say, 'This light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.'"

The sisters looked at their young friend: there was a gentle musical sound in her tones; but her words were strange words—what could they mean?

"I did not know you were such a little enthusiast," whispered Frances, with a faint smile, half of pity, may-be, and half of admiration. Then followed another silence, sad and chilling, while the "little enthusiast's" tears fell fast. She had not yet touched the right string: there was no answering vibration. Oh, for wisdom!

"Is not God our Father?" she asked presently: her voice was low and almost mournful.

There was a response: "Yes, oh yes;" but the

tone was faint and feeble; no faith in it, no love.

"Has he dealt hardly with you, dear friend?" the "little enthusiast" asked timidly. Oh, how timidly! Who was she? what was she, that she should venture to speak a word for Him?

"I suppose I must not say he has: it would not be right to say he has. No, no." But, while Eleanor spake, the quivering lip and flushed brow, and quick impatient voice and gesture, betrayed the rebel heart, and spoke the rebel language—"Why hast thou dealt with me thus?"

"And if he does see fit to suffer affliction to befall us," said the young visitor, gaining courage as she went on, "he can give us something better in exchange for all that he takes away."

"Better! better!" exclaimed the bereaved one; "what can make up for this loss? What can he give instead?"

"Himself, dear Eleanor: God our Father can fill up every breach that death and trouble makes, with his own blessed Self."

Yes, Mercy Matson was a "little enthusiast;" there could be no doubt of it. The sisters exchanged glances which said as much.

"It is easy to say such things when one is not in trouble, I dare say," said Frances, somewhat coldly; "but when that comes, it makes all the difference."

"Do you think so? Oh no, not all the difference," rejoined Mercy: "I know it is not always easy to say from the heart, what is often said with the lip, 'Thy will be done!' But if our Saviour helps us to say it—if he gives us grace to say it," she added persuasively—"then it is easy; it is indeed."

Certainly, Mercy Matson was a "little enthusiast;" every word proved it to the sisters.

"This is the first great trial you have had, perhaps, dear Eleanor," she continued, "and it is no wonder that you feel it; but I hope you will be able to say, by and by, 'It is good for me that I was afflicted.' I remember when I felt as though I could never bear sorrow; and when the first came, I was so rebellious, so sad and naughty, and proud and sinful. But my heavenly Father was patient and loving." And as she said this, Mercy's eyes filled with tears; but her voice no longer faltered. She had touched a vibrating, responsive chord now, too: the sisters were neither selfish nor apathetic. If they had not replied warmly to her former attempts at consolation, it was because the subject and the source of consolation was strange to them. And it is something that they had not professed to understand, and to know all about the matters on which their friend had touched. For, as we have said before, the Bracys, as far as they had ever thought of religion at all, believed that they were Christians.

"And you have known trouble too, dear Mercy?" said Eleanor, with that awakened interest which community even in suffering always produces in minds not rendered callous by vice or despair, or both. "You have known trouble, then? I could scarcely have thought it; so cheerful and happy and contented as you have always seemed, and so lively too. And yet we might have guessed it—"

"Yes, I have indeed known trouble," replied

the "little enthusiast," "nor can I tell you all; but I will tell you a part of my short life's history, if it is worth your hearing."

"Tell us, Mercy, as much of it as you please; but not to distress yourself."

"It will not do that," she said; and then, with unaffected simplicity, she commenced her story.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STORY OF THE STOREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER.

"I do not know whether I shall sink in your estimation," said Mercy, on commencing her narrative, "when I tell you that I am an American by birth."

"Oh no," said Frances Bracy, "we had guessed you were not a native colonist, and fancied you came from England; but we shall not like you any the less for being an American. We love America; there is something sister-like between your country and ours: we shall like you the better for being an American."

"Thank you, dear Frances. Six years ago, then, I was living in one of the cities of our union; my father was a rich man then; and we were not lonely, as we seem now. The first great sorrow I ever knew came upon me at that time: I lost a dear and kind and gentle mother."

"I did not think of your being motherless," said Eleanor, with self-reproach, "when I fancied you had not known sorrow. How selfish I must seem to you."

"Oh no, do not say that; for I do not think it. I might have lost a mother in infancy, you know, and never have felt that heavy stroke. Dear mother! her illness was very short, and her death so unexpected by all but herself, that it seemed as though comfort would never come again to any of us. I was wild with grief: for days I moaned, and sobbed, and wept incessantly; and then came over me a stubborn, sullen gloom. My heart was full of angry, proud rebellion. 'It is cruel, cruel,' I said one day, to a dear friend who was trying to comfort me: 'what right had God to take away my mother, *mine*?' and what more I said, more daring and sinful even than this, I must not tell."

"My friend heard me patiently and kindly; and then he took me by the hand, and led me out into our beautiful garden, and spoke softly to me of the many blessings the kind and gracious God had spared, though one was taken away. I thought he meant the blessings of wealth and luxury; and I answered passionately, that I did not care for them—that it did not signify, then, since my mother was taken away, how or where I lived, or what should become of me. 'I hate the thought of being rich,' I said; 'I hate the sight of all this; and I looked round at the pleasant home."

"Well, it may be," said my friend (he was an old minister at the church we attended)—"it may be that God will try you some day by taking away these blessings too; for riches, you know, are uncertain; but have you no other blessings that you prize more than wealth? Look there," he said, pointing to my father, who was leading by the hand my little sister, in another part of the garden. I shuddered then, and felt that I had spoken foolishly and wickedly. 'Your father and sister,' said the old man, 'are they not blessings? and your brother—for I had a brother too, older

than myself—do you think so little of these as to feel that now God has taken away one, he might as well take all, as you don't value them?'

"I could not answer him for weeping."

"Then he spoke about my mother; of her faith and love and humble trust in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour; of her hope in death; and asked, Would I have the heart to bring her back again from the glory and joy of heaven to this imperfect and sin-stained world, if a wish could accomplish it? I could not say, No; and I dared not say, Yes."

"Then he gave me a message which my own dear mother had intrusted to him, when, because of her illness, they kept me away from her dying bed. It was a loving message to give my young heart to the Saviour, and a prayer that he would bless me indeed. I had again and again heard these same words from her own lips: it was not much, however, that I had thought of them; for I was gay, and loved pleasure more than God. But when I heard them as a message from the dead, my heart seemed melted and bowed down; and when this kind friend left me, I ran to my room, and shut myself in. And oh, what a struggle there was; but I did not leave till I had prayed for pardon and help."

"My mother's pocket Bible—that became mine; and I could not open it without finding marks in it, here and there, which she had made with her own dear hand. It seemed to open naturally at a marked page. Before then, I had cared very little about the Bible; but I now began to love the book which put me so much in mind of her; until at length I came by degrees to love it for its own sake, for my eyes were opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law. I saw that 'God is love.' I had heard this before, but had never known it till then. And though I felt sad at the thought of my past ingratitude, the very certainty of his love gave me hope and peace. And then I found that God can fill with himself, through his dear Son, every vacuum that he makes in our earthly comforts. And is not this love?"

"How strange!" thought the sisters; "but pleasant too, to hear." Ah, "little enthusiast," you have chosen your time well!

"Another sorrow was to come," continued Mercy, after a short silence: "my sweet, darling sister—dear Emmeline—fell ill; and then again I thought, I can never bear this. If she should be taken away, I shall never be happy again. But she *was* taken; after a long illness, the lovely little one died in my arms. Poor father was almost heart-broken, and so were we all. But God helped me to bear this, and made me feel that I must lean more and more upon himself, and less on every created thing. And he not only helped me to bear the sorrow, but to comfort my dear father. Indeed, he soon needed all the comfort I could give; for it was as my old kind friend had warned me—our riches 'took to themselves wings,' as the Bible says. From being wealthy, we suddenly became poor. My father was a merchant; and, in consequence of some imprudent speculations, he lost credit and became bankrupt. He paid in full, however, all that he owed; but when this was done, almost all was gone—house, beautiful gardens, and all that I had so rebelliously declared I could never take pleasure in again."

Then came the trial; and I feared that my heavenly Father would leave me alone, to bear it in my own strength, and to punish me for my sinful words and thoughts. But no, he did not. He gave me more of himself—more than ever. My brother had been at college; but he came home at once, and, like a noble fellow as he is——”

“You have a brother still, then,” said Frances, breaking in upon her friend. “I am glad of that, for I feared the next thing would be that he too was taken away.”

“Oh yes, I have a brother—dear Challoner—I trust I have; though it is long since we heard from him. But I will tell you. He came home from Cambridge, and gave up all his prospects there, in order to help us. He had a little property of his own, which had been willed to him by our mother’s brother; and with this he took a house in the city, and opened a store. We lived with him, and I used to help him sometimes, as well as keep house; and this,” said Mercy, smiling, “is how I came to know anything of store-keeping and accounts. But our dear father began to dislike the place which had been the scene of so many sorrows; Challoner’s health began to give way, too; and so, three years ago, we said good-bye to America, and set sail for Hobart Town. The physicians recommended this part of the world for poor Challoner; and we had not been there long before his health was restored. But business did not exactly prosper; and besides this, news came from America, when we had been a year at our new home, which made it necessary for my brother to return for a time. But before he went we had removed across the straits to Melbourne; and soon afterwards we came to Boomerang, where we are free at least, and live in hope that dear Challoner will come before long and find us out.”

We shall not pretend to say what particular impression was made on the sisters by this simple story: whether Eleanor was soothed in her sorrows by finding that others besides herself had suffered; or whether she and her sister were disposed to conclude that a little of their friend’s enthusiasm would by no means destroy the happiness of this life for them, to say nothing of its apparent superior advantage in preparation for another. Neither shall we presume to imagine that Frances Bracy had the slightest shadow of a reason, beyond that of mere natural curiosity, for asking when her friend imagined her brother would return—also, whether he were many years older than his sister—and also—but we will not let our imaginations run riot, dear reader.

A FRIGATE IN A TRAP.

MANY of our readers will have read with interest the narrative that recently appeared in our newspapers, of the bold manner in which the English frigate “Retribution,” when bearing a missive from the allied French and British fleets now in the Black Sea, dashed into the harbour of Sebastopol, and threaded its mazes of batteries and winding approaches. We have been reminded by this action of a parallel though much more dangerous one, which was performed by the late sir Samuel Hood, in 1791, during the revolutionary

war with France. The anecdote is related by the late Basil Hall, and from it even the most pacific reader may learn a lesson of the value of mental collectedness in circumstances of excitement and peril.

“A trifling incident,” says captain Hall, “occurred, which suggested to our thoughts an important service of sir Samuel Hood’s, which, although it be familiarly known in the navy, may not be so fresh in the recollection of persons on shore. A question arose in the boat as to whether or not the land-wind was blowing. Some said there was a breeze up the river, while others maintained that the wind blew down towards the sea. The admiral let us go on speculating and arguing for some time, and then said, ‘You are both wrong; there is not a breath of air either up or down the river. At all events we shall soon see, if you will strike me a light.’ This was done accordingly; and the admiral, standing on the after-thwart, held the naked candle high over his head, while the men ceased rowing.

“‘There, you see,’ exclaimed he; ‘the flame stands quite upright, which proves, that if there be any breeze at all, it blows no faster than the stream runs down.’

“As he yet spoke, the flame bent from the land, and in the next instant was puffed out by a slight gust from the forest.

“‘Ah! that’s something like!’ exclaimed the commander-in-chief; adding, in an under tone, as he resumed his seat, ‘I have known the time when a flaw of wind not greater than has just blown out this candle has rendered good service to his majesty.’

“We knew what was meant, and so will every naval man; but others may be interested by being told, that early in the year 1794, when captain Hood commanded his majesty’s ship ‘Juno,’ he had very nearly lost his ship in a most extraordinary manner. The port of Toulon, though in possession of the English at the time of his departure on a short trip to Malta, had been evacuated while the ‘Juno’ was absent; and as the land was made in the night, no suspicion of that important change of affairs arose in the mind of any one. With his wonted decision, therefore, into the port he dashed; for, although the ‘Juno’ carried no pilot, captain Hood’s knowledge of every port he had once visited rendered him comparatively indifferent on that score. A couple of the sharpest-sighted midshipmen were stationed with glasses to look out for the fleet; but no ships were seen—for the best of all reasons—none were there!

“One vessel only, a small brig, could be detected, and the captain, supposing the fleet had run into the inner harbour during the recent easterly gale, resolved to push up likewise. The batteries all kept quiet, and though the brig hailed the frigate as she passed in a language so indistinct that no one could make it out, not the least suspicion was excited.

“Captain Hood, in his official letter to lord Hood, (see Naval Chronicle for 1807, vol. xvii. p. 11,) says, ‘I supposed they wanted to know what ship it was, and I told them it was an English frigate called the ‘Juno.’ The brig, however, was not quite so courteous in return; for they merely replied by the word ‘Viva,’ but made no

answer to the captain's repeated inquiry, both in English and French, as to the brig's name, and the position of the British admiral's fleet. As the 'Juno' pressed under the stern of this treacherous little craft, a voice called out, 'Luff! luff!' which naturally induced captain Hood to put his helm down, from an idea that shoal water lay close to leeward of him. Nothing could have been more adroitly managed by the Frenchman, for before the frigate came head to wind, she stuck fast upon the shoal, to which the words 'Luff! luff!' had no doubt been intended to direct her.

"A boat was now observed to proceed from the brig to the town. As there was but little wind, and the water perfectly smooth, the 'Juno's' sails were clewed up and handed; but before the men were all off the yards, a gust of wind came sweeping down the harbour, and drove her off the shoal so suddenly as to give her brisk sternway. The anchor was speedily let go, but when she tended, the after-part of her keel took the ground, and the rudder could not be moved. The launch and cutter being instantly hoisted out, the usual preparations were made to lay out a kedge, to heave the ship off.

"At this critical moment a boat came alongside. The people appeared anxious to get out of her, and two of them, apparently officers, came up the side. They said it was the regulation of the port, as well as the commanding officer's orders, that ships should go further into the harbour, there to perform ten days' quarantine. In the despatch relating to this transaction, captain Hood says, 'I kept asking them where lord Hood's ship lay;' and those who remember sir Samuel's impatient manner when any one to whom he addressed himself trifled with his questions, will easily imagine how he must have perplexed and overawed the two Frenchmen, who really knew not what to do or say next. In the meantime, one of the mids, who happened to be thrusting his head forward after the investigating manner of this enterprising class of officers, said apart to the captain,

" 'Why, sir, they wear national cockades!'

" 'I looked at one of their hats more steadfastly,' says captain Hood in his narrative, 'and by the moonlight clearly distinguished the three colours.'

" 'Perceiving they were suspected,' continues sir Samuel in his narrative, 'and on my questioning them again about lord Hood, one of them replied, *Soyez tranquille, les Anglais sont de braves gens—nous les traitons bien; l'amiral Anglais est sortie il y a quelques tems.*' "

"Sir Samuel well says that it may be more easily conceived than words can express what he felt at that moment. In one instant, the situation of the poor 'Juno,' which was almost desperate, became known throughout the ship. The officers naturally crowded round their captain to learn the worst; while the Frenchmen, bowing to the right and left, grinned and apologized for the disagreeable necessity of making them all prisoners! The rest of this singular story, unique in the history of the navy, and altogether wonderful considering the formidable nature of the trap into

which the frigate had fallen, will be best told in the words of the accomplished officer himself, to whose presence of mind, courage, and professional dexterity, the escape of the ship was entirely due. The personal regard in which the captain was held by every officer, man, and boy on board, and the thorough confidence which they possessed in his talents, enabled him to undertake a service which an officer held in less esteem might have found it very difficult to carry through. It used, indeed, to be said of Hood's ship, that, fore and aft, there was but one heart and one mind.

"After describing the deportment of the French officers, he goes on to say, in his despatch, that 'a flaw of wind coming down the harbour, lieutenant Webley said to me, 'I believe, sir, we shall be able to fetch out if we can get her under sail.' I immediately perceived we should have a chance of saving the ship; at least if we did not, we ought not to lose her without some contention. I therefore ordered every person to their respective stations, and the Frenchmen to be sent below. The latter, perceiving some bustle, began to draw their sabres; on which I directed some of the marines to take the half pikes and force them below, which was soon done. I believe in an instant such a change in people was never seen—every officer and man was at his duty; and I do believe, within three minutes every sail in the ship was set, and the yards braced ready for casting. The steady and active assistance of lieutenant Turner and all the officers prevented any confusion in our critical situation; and as soon as the cable was taut, I ordered it to be cut, and had the good fortune to see the ship start from the shore. The head sails were filled; a favourable flaw of wind coming at the same time gave her good way, and we had every prospect of getting out if the forts did not disable us. To prevent our being retarded by the boats, I ordered them to be cut adrift, as also the French boat. The moment the brig saw us begin to loose sails, we could plainly perceive she was getting her guns ready, and we also saw lights in all the batteries. When we had shot far enough for the brig's guns to bear on us, which was not more than three ships' lengths, she began to fire; also a fort a little on the starboard bow, and soon after all of them, on both sides, as they could bring their guns to bear. As soon as the sails were well trimmed, I beat to quarters to get our guns ready, but not with an intention of firing till we were sure of getting out. When abreast of the centre of Cape Sepet, I was afraid we should have been obliged to make a tack; but as we drew near the shore, and were ready to go about, she came up two points, and just weathered the cape. As we passed very close along that shore, the batteries kept up as brisk a fire as the wetness of the weather would admit. In spite of all, however, the ship was worked out unharmed.

"The whole of this admirable piece of service was performed so quickly, and at the same time with so much coolness, that there occurred little or no opportunity for any remarkable individual exertion. Everything, as I have heard it described by sir Samuel Hood himself and by the officers, went on as if the ship had been working out of Plymouth sound at noonday. One little incident, however, which caused much amusement in the

* "Be easy; the English are fine fellows, and we treat them well. The English admiral left this some time ago."

ship, will help to show the degree of regard in which sir Samuel was held by those immediately about him, and to disprove the proverb of no man being a hero to his valet de chambre.

"Dennis M'Carty, an old and faithful servant of captain Hood, who was quartered at one of the main-deck guns in the cabin, stood firm enough till the batteries opened on the 'Juno.' No sooner had the firing commenced, and the shot came whizzing over and through all parts of the ship, than Dennis, to the great amaze and scandal of his companions, dropped the side tackle-fall, and fairly run off from his gun. Nothing, however, could be further from poor Pat's mind than fear, except fear for his master, behind whom he soon stationed himself on the quarter-deck; and wherever captain Hood moved, there Dennis followed, like his shadow. The poor fellow appeared totally unconscious of any personal danger to himself, though the captain was necessarily in the hottest of the fire. At length sir Samuel, turning suddenly round, encountered the Irishman full butt.

"'Ho! master Dennis,' exclaimed the captain, 'what brings you here? and why do you keep running about after me? Go down to your gun, man!'

"'Oh, your honour,' replied Dennis, 'I thought it likely you might be hurt, so I wished to be near you to give you some help.'

"There was no resisting this; the captain laughed in the midst of the battle; and poor Dennis was allowed to take his own way, having no care for himself.

"It would be quite impossible, within any moderate compass, even to enumerate the important services which sir Samuel Hood rendered to his country, both before and after the time alluded to.

"His *forte* appears to have been that invaluable quality of all great commanders, promptitude in seeing what was best to be done, and decision of purpose in carrying it into execution. At the moment of greatest doubt and difficulty, and when scarcely any one else could see through the confusion, he appears invariably to have taken those useful practical views which the calmest subsequent reflection proved to have been the most expedient."

SMITHFIELD.

WANDERING the other day in the outskirts of "merry Islington," we came undesignedly upon what was so lately Copenhagen Fields—fields which for many generations have been regarded by a very considerable section of northern London as a kind of perennial play-ground—their legitimate arena for exercise and recreation. Now they are no longer fields; the robe of green grass has been rudely stripped from the back of mother earth; her quiet bosom has been delved, dug, and upturned by ten thousand mattocks, pickaxes, and shovels, and, piled mountains high, is at the moment we write burning and smouldering in hundreds of petty volcanoes, among and over which a whole colony of brawny fellows, in their shirt-sleeves, are clambering and running, with pikes, spades, and wheelbarrows, supplying the fuel and nursing the flame, or heaping on the excavated clay, and turning it over and over so as to subject

every particle of soil to the action of the fire. Others are digging pits in the ground, and stacking together masses of cloven blocks of wood to form the central fire round which the clay and "breeze," or sifted coal, is arranged in alternate layers to produce fresh volcanoes. The object is to reduce the soft upper crust of the earth into one immense conglomerate of rubble brick, to serve as a foundation for the new cattle market which is destined to occupy this spot, once the favourite holiday resort of the metropolitans.

At the moment of our writing this, the scene is one of a wild and savage-looking aspect, reminding the spectator of the busy but dreary wastes of the "iron country," or of some populous coal district in one of the northern counties. The gleaming, flickering fires, the volumes of smoke which you inhale with every breath, and the rugged outline which everywhere meets the eye, impart a picturesque effect to the rude and ruinous foreground, which contrasts well with the quietude of the distant landscape crowned with the woody slope of Highgate Hill. The human accessories are the least captivating part of the picture. They are navvies for the most part, with whom, too often, coarse, blasphemous, and brutal language seems the instinctive form of speech, and among whom intemperance and quarrelling are the natural result of association. Yonder, a crowd of four or five hundred have suddenly abandoned their labours and drawn off to a level portion of the ground to witness a fight between two of their number, and we hear from the distance of a quarter of a mile their hoarse voices hounding on the combatants to their savage encounter.

We look in vain for Copenhagen House—that lonely, rural tavern which, embowered in trees, stood for so many years an artistic object, with its duck-pond in front and cricket-ground in the rear—the centre of rural sports and of other less innocent kinds of recreation. Not a stone of it remains, nor so much as a twig of its surrounding trees; all have been swept away to make room for the new cattle market which is to supersede Smithfield, and thus deliver central London from its greatest and most intolerable nuisance.

The accidental sight of the vast preparations making for the accomplishment of a change so long and earnestly desiderated, suggested to us the idea that it might be worth our while, and worth the reader's while, to take a brief glance at the present cattle market of London, while it yet remains to be looked at, and before it has become only a subject of history.

But what sort of a thing is the cattle market of London? Have our readers, and our country readers especially, ever bestowed any serious consideration upon that question? As a preliminary to our glance at the market itself, let us look for one moment at the amount of business done within the narrow confines of Smithfield, and we shall be convinced that it is no trifling subject which we have to deal with. It has been proved, then, that there are sold annually in Smithfield market little less than two hundred and fifty thousand cattle, and a million and a half of sheep, which would give for every week's sale above four thousand eight hundred head of cattle, and of sheep between twenty-eight and twenty-nine thousand. This is

independent of the troops of horses and donkeys, and the armies of pigs, of which, as they are not subject to a capitulation toll, no accurate census is preserved. But, as the supply some weeks falls short, and at others greatly exceeds these amounts, it is plain that occasionally the market must be crowded with numbers far in excess even of this enormous average; and they have been known to amount to as much in the whole as between forty and fifty thousand in a single day. We should imagine, from what we have personally observed, that above four-fifths of the weekly sale takes place on the Monday morning market; in fact it is to this market especially that the breeders from all parts of the country send their stock, and that the importations from foreign countries are consigned.

To any one who lives, as we have done for many years, on the line of a leading cattle route, say from the north, the first indications of the Monday morning's cattle market will be often visible as early as the preceding Saturday afternoon and evening. These indications are detached flocks of sheep and herds of cattle under the charge of drovers, on their way to the lairs, where they rest after their march, and it is to be hoped are fed and watered previous to being driven into the market. The lairs are in some instances comfortable quarters for the beasts, where they are stalled and sheltered, frequently under the inspection of their owners or consignees, though these latter have not that interest in the well-being of the animals that they should have, seeing that their commission for selling depends not upon the price the creatures fetch in the market, but upon the number sold—the same sum being paid for a beast that realizes but ten pounds or less as for one that brings forty or fifty. Some of the lairs are little better than open spaces of waste ground, without shelter or accommodation; and it may happen that however desirous the custodian of the animals may be to keep them in good condition, he is yet compelled, through their late arrival, to locate them where he can. All through the night of Saturday these isolated small droves succeed each other at short intervals, till hours after midnight, and their melancholy ba-a-ing and bellowing, broken by the hoarse bawling of their guardians and the baying of dogs, serves as the lullaby of thousands of Londoners after the toils of the week. Early on the Sunday morning the flocks and droves become more dense and frequent,* and we have often watched them from our window defiling past in one unbroken column for hours together.

Experience has taught the inhabitants along the line of route to keep their garden-gates closed; for if one poor sheep, beguiled by the apparition of a blade or two of fresh green grass, bolt in upon your flower-beds, the whole flock is sure to follow, and then you have the spectacle of half-an-hour's hunt, by means of an angry drover and a worrying sheep-dog, to get them out again. Sometimes a poor sheep is knocked up, and can go no further, even with the help of the driver's goad and the persecutions of his dog—and he is left panting by the road-side to recover himself, or to

be fetched away in a butcher's cart. Sometimes it is a footsore and over-driven ox who is brought to a final stand-still; he cannot proceed another step, but plumps down in the middle of the road, and to all appeals made to rouse him—and these are frequently all too cruel—answers only by a mournful bellow. A rather curious machine has been contrived for his relief, and if he does not get again upon his legs in an hour or two, this is sure, especially if the beast is a valuable one, to make its appearance upon the spot. It consists of a very substantial and very low carriage, the flooring of which is within a foot or so of the ground, and furnished with a stout tail-board, which, when let down upon its hinges, forms an inclined plane. Near the shafts, and in the body of the carriage, is a kind of crane worked by a crank. The vehicle, stopping in the rear of the fatigued and motionless ox, the tail-board is let down, and girths being placed round his body, the crank is wound up, and, with very little trouble indeed, he is deposited upon the floor of the carriage, and rides off to the lair, where, in all likelihood, he reaches in time to be driven to the market with his fellows.

Since the completion of the various lines of railway, and particularly of the Great Northern, which has been opened for traffic but a comparatively short time, it is noticeable that the cattle and sheep arriving on foot in charge of drovers have very much diminished in number. A prodigious quantity of them now travel by railway, and are thus spared the fatigue and pain of a forced march of perhaps a hundred miles or more. As there are not lairs sufficient to contain all that arrive, many flocks are turned into fields, where they are at least as well off as their companions in misfortune.

By a regulation, which we are very sure cannot boast of any great antiquity, the time for packing the live beef, mutton, and pork into the market of Smithfield commences not before ten o'clock on Sunday evening. No sooner has the hour struck than the sheep, who are allowed precedence by an hour and a half or two hours of the oxen, come swarming in by thousands at every avenue, with a multitudinous ba-a-ing and bleating which will not intermit for a moment for the next twelve hours. They are driven into the pens, capable of containing comfortably about a dozen each, but often crammed with as many as twenty, by the licensed Smithfield drovers, with the aid of their sagacious dogs. These drovers, who are in number above a thousand, are the only men of the craft allowed to work in Smithfield. They are paid by the salesmen, and, from long experience at the business, are amazingly expert at a function which would sadly puzzle a stranger.

A curious and characteristic spectacle is this night scene, and it is accompanied by sounds not a little bewildering to unaccustomed ears. The cracking of whips, the heavy thumping of sticks, the barking of dogs, the bawling of angry voices, and the ever-surging, monotonous ba-a-ing, make up a babel of such strange utterances as you would find it difficult to match elsewhere. How the whole inexplicable affair is possibly accomplished at all—how it is that Mr. Grundy's south-downs don't get mixed up and sold along with those of farmer Ruddle—or Mr. Boodle's Norfolk with Mr. Sloper's lot from Wiltshire, you can hardly

* Petitions are now being got up to have the market day altered from Monday to Tuesday, a most desirable change, as the desecration of the Lord's day is, under the present system, most open and offensive.

from an idea. 'Tis true you see the drover's ragged terrier scampering like a mad creature over the backs of five hundred sheep, and lugging out by the ear from a solid flock an unfortunate mutton who had strayed into strange company; but you cannot for a moment conceive that there are not a thousand more in the market equally gone astray. But you are in the wrong. When farmers Grundy, Ruddle, and Co. come, as perhaps they may, to cast an eye over their stock in the morning, they will find every mutton in his place, and think it nothing extraordinary either—though it *was* all done by torch-light, and by fellows who, if you were to ask them, could hardly tell you how many sides there are to a triangle.

The cattle do not enter the market till the hour of midnight has struck. With them still come more and more flocks of sheep, as well as calves, and, at a later hour, pigs; and, as the cattle are tethered as fast as they arrive to the stout railings outside the sheep-pens—an operation in which very little time is lost—we perceive the reason why a certain number of sheep are admitted and accommodated before the cattle come in. From midnight to four or five in the morning, the four-footed victims of London's enormous appetite keep thronging in, amidst a din and uproar increasing every minute. With the dawn of early morning come upon the scene a race of careful dealers, who bring to market in carts the produce of their own little farms—sheep, lambs, young porkers, and sucking-pigs, and perhaps a calf or two. These are soon followed by the butchers, who come rattling onwards in their carts, and without whom the whole affair, monstrous as it is, would prove but an unprofitable show.

The butcher of course comes to market very wide awake, although nine-tenths of London is fast asleep; and we need not say that his resolution is to buy as cheap as he can. He knows the current price of meat, but he speculates, too, upon the turn of the market; and before he buys he consults the published accounts of the stock on the spot, which he can see at his house of call, and by which he is able to judge of the probability of a rise or fall. He can tell at a glance whether an animal which takes his fancy is sold or to sell, because so soon as sold, if an ox, its tail is clipped of hair, and, if a sheep, it is marked with a well-known sign. He can tell, too, within a very trifle, the weight of the heaviest animal, by simply handling him for a few moments. The salesman, who, we may remark by the way, is often a personage of no small consequence, and much better off in the world than either the breeder or the buyer of the beasts that pass through his hands, is always on the spot. Not much time is lost, especially if good stock is spare in the market, in driving a bargain. Butchers will haggle, and so will salesmen too; but both are sufficiently elastic to come to a reasonable agreement. The bargain is generally struck without much circumlocution, for which indeed there is not time; and having joined hands upon it, which is considered as binding, the buyer lugs forth his pair of scissors from his waistcoat pocket, cuts his initials or private mark on the flanks of his purchases, and consigns them to the charge of his agent to be driven home. Observe, the buyer pays no money to the salesman

in the open market—yet the money is paid, in most instances, before the beasts are delivered to the agent. The market-banks are appointed for this purpose, and there are several of them for the convenience of the dealers; they serve as a protection to the owners of the cattle against any possible complicity or collusion between the trafficking parties.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A FEW HOURS WITH ARAGO.

ONE morning, in the spring of 1850, we were musing somewhat uneasily in our apartment at the Hôtel Bristol, in the Place Vendôme, Paris. Only recently arrived from our own peaceful land, the rumours which prevailed of the certainty of an *émeute*, and the probability of another revolution, were not particularly cheering. In fact, we had wound ourselves up to the pitch—not exactly of heroism, but the reverse—which made us consider it as rather a strange way of “going a pleasuring,” to be shot or guillotined at Paris, albeit with the graceful *politesse* of the Parisians. According to report, general —, upon the sound of the first disturbance, was to issue an order, or “advice,” to the English, as well as the French, to confine themselves strictly to their houses, on penalty of becoming victims to sabres and musket balls. Lord —, the highest diplomatic authority, had assured our fellow-traveller that there was no danger of an *émeute* “before Saturday.” Many of our countrymen had provided passports, to be in readiness for instant flight; while the mounted guard at each end of the principal streets, and the frequent march past our windows of armed troops, with their magnificent military music, gave a sort of substance to the shadows of report. Every night, imaginary tocsins and *générales* disturbed our slumbers; every day we traced the concealed ferocity of a *Républicain Rouge*, in the most innocent of our friends and the most assiduous of our *garçons* and guides.

On the morning to which we have alluded a tap at the door of the little ante-room announced a visitor; and in walked one, whom it was easy to pronounce, without hearing him individually named, to be one of the few “whose names are not born to die.” He was tall, though somewhat bent, with hair grizzled and matted, eyes deeply sunk, and lofty brow, furrowed more with sorrow, care, and labour than with age; his features were not handsome, yet was there something in them grand and massive, and expressive at once of expansive intellect and of the deepest depression. Our heart turned towards him instinctively with a tenderness and reverence, not lessened when we found that it was Arago! He spoke no English, although reading and understanding it with ease; and presently a flood of scientific conversation, in a medley of French and English, threatened to sweep away the remembrance that any other character but that of a philosopher belonged to this great Frenchman. Arago, however, to our mind's eye, was present as the republican—as the minister of war and marine, during the short-lived provisional government of 1848—as the bearer of the white flag at the murderous barricades, while

bravely attempting to stem the awful passions to which republicanism had given a form and a consistency. However the incongruity may have been regretted, there was something noble and disinterested in the patriotic feeling which drew the philosopher from his study—the astronomer from his quiet heavens—thus to do and dare. At length we ventured to interpose a few words, amidst the thick coming theories, demonstrations, and discussions—to make anxious inquiries as to the truth of the rumoured danger. A cheerful laugh, and “*Bah! bah! Paris est assez tranquille*,” had a wonderful effect in banishing the dreams and nightmares of an excited imagination. He went on to give his opinion as to the state of the people, the false reports and exaggerations so currently circulated and believed, and the improbability of further danger and bloodshed, at least for a time, which subsequent events fully verified. There was something in his voice and look that gave one confidence, and we accordingly dismissed our apprehensions, with that strange feeling of partial disappointment at the cessation of painful excitement which is, we suppose, an ingredient in most minds, but with a deep emotion of thankfulness for the hope of a breathing-time of peace for misguided Paris.

Some days after we went to the Observatoire—a large and magnificent building erected by Louis Quatorze, of which M. Arago was director, and in which he had his home of many years—one, too, well suited to the rugged grandeur of his appearance, to the abstruse nature of his pursuits, and to the comparative loneliness and quietude of his life. There he dwelt, amidst the instruments and books, which were, we fear, his chief consolations for the dissatisfaction of life. There he lived, with the external heavens brought close to him by means of the magnificent telescopes of the Observatoire—those starry, beautiful heavens, which yet he could not see. Yes! Arago was blind, or nearly so; for, besides a constitutional tendency to this malady, the nerves of his eyes had never recovered the shocks they encountered in that bloody Parisian summer of 1848, when the muskets and the cannons of the infuriated insurgents were turned against the brave peacemaker, although he wonderfully escaped further injury.

We were shown into Arago's library—into that room of thought, where had been forged so many mental levers to stir up the minds of men. It was a large and lofty chamber, hung with prints and calotypes of contemporary *savans* of all nations. Books and pamphlets were heaped on every chair, and the tables were covered with scientific instruments. The philosopher soon came in, habited in his *robe de chambre*, and it was easy to read upon his expressive countenance the traces of a new and deep depression. That morning his attached friend and scientific companion, M. Gay Lussac, the celebrated chemist, had breathed his last at his dwelling in the Jardin des Plantes, and it was touching to see the tender feeling and deep sense of bereavement, so rare in a man no longer young and of such absorbing thought and occupation. He spoke a few words, also, very despondingly, of his own health, and seemed to anticipate that the close of his life was near at hand. His cheerfulness, however, partially returned, as our companion directed

the conversation to his favourite topics. We sat there for hours, our heart softened by home letters, which we read wistfully, in that strange and interesting dwelling, and our thoughts turning with the deepest interest to the history—past, present, and future—of that lonely and remarkable man, whose life, occupations, and sufferings had formed so chequered a career. We had not then the key to much that would have assisted us in reading the strange lines of character and feeling to be traced in those expressive features.

Before saying farewell to Arago we went all through the spacious halls and beautiful machinery of the Observatoire—all so well worthy of admiration, as well as interesting from being the home and the scene of labour of so eminent a man. At last we emerged upon the top, from whence we saw the most beautiful view that could be imagined, of that strangely fascinating, wonderful city, with its spires and its faubourgs, its Seine and its bridges, stretched out before us, as calmly and silently as if there existed not within it so many appalling elements of woe and crime and anarchy. A little incident, that occurred at the door of the Observatoire, threatened to recal our *rouge* fever. When we were seated in the carriage, one of the *savans*, who had been doing the honours of the Observatoire, had confessed his royalist tendency and abhorrence of the much-abused words, *Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité*, which were stuck up in all directions; in the eagerness of our conversation we quite forgot the dulcet tones which such a subject then necessitated in Paris, and our scientific friend was just presenting us with a small tumbler, royally ciphered, which had been rescued from the sack of the Tuileries, as a memorial of our royalist sympathies, when we became aware of having attracted the attention of the French footman and coachman on the box, who were listening with an unmistakable earnestness of attention and ferocity of look. The philosopher, with somewhat unphilosophic haste, changed the subject, and we immediately found the weather to be a topic of engrossing interest. We drove away from the Observatoire with a melancholy feeling that we should never again see its distinguished *chef*, which indeed was the case. On our next visit we found that Arago was a prisoner from a severe attack of illness, and shortly afterwards we took our final departure from Paris.

A few particulars of the life and death of this eminent *savant*, in addition to what are given in a former volume of our work,* may not be uninteresting to our readers. Dominique François Jean Arago was born February 26, 1786, in the village of Estégar, near Perpignan, in the department of the eastern Pyrenees. Tradition says that his education was so backward, that at fourteen years of age the future philosopher could not read, although he made such good use of the ensuing four years, that at eighteen he was admitted a pupil into the Polytechnic School at Paris—a seminary distinguished for the nurture of all the intellect and science of France. When Arago was about twenty-two years of age he was chosen, in conjunction with M. Biot and two Spanish commissioners, for the arduous task of completing the

* See article in “Leisure Hour,” No. 102.

measurement of the arc of the meridian, which had been left unfinished by Mechain and Delambre. This involved a residence of several months on the top of one of the highest pinnacles of the Pyrenees, where the astronomers were exposed to hardships of various kinds, and especially to the fierce and cold mountain blasts, which constantly overthrew their little hovels. Biot was obliged to return to Paris, leaving Arago to encounter worse dangers than those of cold and tempest. War had been in the meantime proclaimed between France and Spain, and the signal-fires, which were necessary as means of communication between the innocent philosophers, were looked upon by the ignorant peasantry as sure tokens of treachery, and Arago was denounced as a French spy. His knowledge of a Spanish *patois*, and the red cap and cloak of a Catalonian peasant aided his escape to the island of Majorca, where, in the fortress of Belair, he completed his calculations; he was only allowed egress from thence, however, upon the condition of returning to Paris *via* Algiers.

On his voyage to Marseilles the ship was captured by a Spanish privateer, and Arago, after a short imprisonment in a military fortress, was sent to the hulks of Palamos; by the intercession of the dey of Algiers, he and his companions in misfortune were set at liberty. After once more turning his face towards his own land, the vessel, when at the very mouth of the harbour of Marseilles, was again driven to sea by a hurricane, and shipwrecked upon the rocks of Sardinia, then at war with Algiers. Disguised as a Bedouin Arab, Arago at length contrived to retrace his steps to the latter place of refuge, and, after several more threatenings of disaster, arrived safely at Paris. Napoleon Buonaparte, who loved to be considered a patron of science, and who had assumed the somewhat anomalous titles of "General-in-chief and Member of the Institute," seemed to be actuated by even a higher and more magnanimous motive in appointing Arago to be one of the professors of the Polytechnic School; for, when a pupil in that same seminary, he had given his vote against the consulate being for life. Buonaparte, who never forgot and rarely forgave, seemed to take a pleasure on this occasion in rewarding the honesty of the young philosopher. We shall not attempt to allude to the brilliant discoveries and successful scientific career which rendered him an ornament and a benefit to his country, while the power and eloquence of his various biographical writings proved his claim to the character of a distinguished writer.

In 1816, M. Arago visited London, with his intimate friend, M. Gay Lussac, and returned to England in 1834, for the purpose of attending the meeting of the British Association, which was held that year in Edinburgh. At the time of the revolution of 1830 he commenced his political career, and was elected member of the Chamber of Deputies for the Lower Seine. His powers of oratory were so highly rated that it was said "his manner is so expressive that light seems to issue from his eyes, from his lips, and from his fingers."

In 1848, as we have already seen, he took a prominent part in the stormy events of the time, although he soon returned to his retirement. He never, however, regained his health or his spirits,

both of which had been most seriously affected by the death of a beloved wife, for whom he mourned with all the depth and intensity of an affectionate and sensitive temperament. The public trials of his life were not yet ended. In 1852, when an empire so strangely arose out of a republic, Arago was called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the emperor Louis Napoleon, or to resign the position which he had made so honourable—the home which had been his for nearly half a century—and the establishment which, in his own words, "was for him a second country." His path of duty was clear, however; he had ever been a consistent, though never an ultra republican, and as one of the founders of the republic he had contributed to the abolition of all political oaths. He therefore wrote a letter of refusal and of resignation of his office, protesting at the same time against the injustice of the sentence, with regard to the members of a purely literary and scientific body, like the Institute, in words so energetic as well as pathetic, that the emperor made an exception, in the words of the official letter, "in favour of a *savant*, whose works had thrown lustre on France, and whose existence his government would regret to embitter."

Arago's health continued rapidly to decline, and it adds a deeper shade to the passage of such a gifted mind through the dark valley of the shadow of death, that we have no knowledge of the dawning of faith's guiding light. We must record, however, a touching and beautiful conversation, which gives us at least the satisfaction of knowing that Arago possessed the treasures of a praying mother and a faithful friend. A Swiss philosopher, who, in consequence of his grief for the loss of his wife, had been led to seek and to find consolation in the promises and revelations of scripture, wished to make his illustrious friend a partaker of the same happiness, although knowing, says he, "the difficulties of a mind which would only admit what it could perfectly comprehend, and would only believe what it had, so to speak, seen and touched. We conversed upon the marvels of creation, and the great questions relative to the formation of worlds. The name of God was introduced. This led Arago to complain of the difficulties which his reason experienced in understanding God. One saw clearly the struggle which passed in his mind, with regard to those truths which are sometimes more easily felt than demonstrated by the aid of pure reason. 'But,' said I, 'it is still more difficult not to comprehend God.' He did not deny it. 'Only,' added he, 'in this case I abstain, for it is impossible for me to understand the God of your philosophers.' 'It is not with them that we are dealing,' replied I, 'although I believe that true philosophy necessarily conducts us to belief in God; it is of the God of the Christian that I wish to speak.' 'Ah,' exclaimed he, 'He was the God of my mother, before whom she always experienced so much comfort in kneeling.' 'Doubtless,' I answered. He said no more; his heart had spoken; this time he had understood."

On Saturday, the 1st of October, 1853, he was able to see Lord Brougham, the friend of many years, and conversed with much of his usual interest, strength, and animation, although in a few hours his voice was silenced for ever. On Sunday

evening he breathed his last, aged sixty-seven, and his last words formed the key-note of his life. "*Travaillez, travaillez bien*," said he to M. Barral, his former pupil and favourite fellow-labourer. The proofs of his laborious career will soon appear in twelve volumes, preceded by a memoir of his youth, written by himself, and comprising three volumes of scientific notices, of which it is touchingly told, that the new edition "*a été préparée par Arago mourant*." In the French Journal from which we have already quoted,* it is said that the 120,000 francs, resulting from the copyright of these works, "will be almost the whole property of this illustrious *savant*, who constantly forgot himself—who carried disinterestedness perhaps beyond its proper limits; he might almost be thought a careless father—he to whom his family was everything—so constantly did he neglect occasions which might have assured to his children a wealthy future."

The emperor decreed a public funeral for this man, so widely celebrated and so deeply beloved, which took place on the 5th of October last. Brigades of soldiers lined the streets, and accompanied the immense procession, in which also were two imperial state carriages, containing representatives of the court. In spite of a heavy rain, the procession was followed or awaited by crowds in silent and tearful sorrow. As many as twelve thousand persons thus "assisted" at the great mourning, proving "that the name of Arago had preserved all its *prestige* and its immense popularity."

In the strange and incongruous streets of that truly national city of the dead, the cemetery of Père la Chaise, rest the remains of him whose hand had directed the heavenward telescope, and signed senatorial mandates; whose eyes had wept the bitterest tears of bereavement, and gazed unmoved upon pointed cannon; whose voice had instructed from the chair, and rebelled on the tribune—Arago, the mourner, the biographer, the republican, the statesman, the philosopher!

IS THE TOAD VENOMOUS?

"Toad that under the cold stone,
Days and nights has thirty-one,
Sweltered venom, sleeping got,
Boil them first i' the charmed pot."

MANY years ago the writer, then *un petit garçon*, gained access to a chemical laboratory which had been closed during a three months' recess. It had just been unlocked for the purpose of cleaning and sweetening preparatory to the winter's campaign. What a strange picture was there! The roaring furnace was icy cold, and the sand-bath on the top of it, indented with the Florence flasks and retorts of last session, was plentifully coated with soot and dust. The benches were desolate, and nothing but the broken fragments of beakers, retorts, and twelve-ouncers, or the film of orange or blue crystals, told that they had been the scene of many a careful manipulation, or, mayhap, careless smash. Even the test-bottles, with their many-coloured contents, seemed to feel the solitude,

and not a few had given vent to tears, which, in the cold loneliness of the spot, had frozen to crystal. My old and somewhat dreaded friend, the galvanic battery, seemed quite unstrung, and his elder brother, the electric machine, was literally clothed in dust and ashes. But that which, of all other things, was calculated to bring the deepest shade of melancholy on my feelings, was a dirty pneumatic trough filled with water of a suspicious tint and somewhat cadaverous odour. In this trough had been left a poor half-starved frog, or toad—I know not which—the victim of many a shocking experiment, who knew, as well as the best third-year student, and that by his own sad experience, the effects produced on the nervous system by the juxtaposition of plates of copper and zinc.

Never shall I forget the sight which greeted my curious eyes on peering into that dark and dusty trough. There lay the osseous remains of the poor reptile stretched out in the attitude of his last convulsive struggle. What a wonderful sight to one who had scarcely expected to find a bone of any sort in a frog or toad! So perfect was the skeleton that, in my boyish enthusiasm, I tried to pick it up, but the mysterious junction of bone to bone had dissolved with the capsular ligaments, and away the pieces flew with the agitation of the water, to be lost in its muddy bottom. Since that time the writer has seen much and borne much, being of the class known as naturalists; but he has never, amid all his changes, lost sight of his old friend. During the interval, the bold lion, the sleek panther, and the noble horse, with scores of other creatures of more or less interest, have been by his knife robbed of flesh and tendon, to be fitted up as bony monuments of their faded beauty or power, but none of these afforded him the same pleasure as the dissection of the ugly toad, whose skeleton now sits calmly on the table before him.

Toads and frogs belong to a class of animals denominated the amphibie, from the fact of the animals composing it possessing the power of living on land or in water; and they were formerly classed with serpents and crocodiles—simply as reptiles. They differ from frogs by having no teeth in either jaw nor on the palate, in having shorter hind feet, and being covered over with dark suspicious-looking warts. Many are the conflicting opinions upon the question which we have placed at the head of this article. That the toad *spits* out, as is popularly supposed, a venomous saliva is, to say the least of it, highly doubtful. The pustules of the skin, however, contain a semi-fluid matter which has generally been allowed to be irritating. Dr. Jeremiah Kirby, for instance, says that, "when provoked, toads emit from their warty skin a frothy fluid, which was formerly supposed to be venomous, but which is merely sufficiently irritating to affect the delicate skin of some animals on which it falls. It is chiefly the ugly form and lurid appearance of these animals which has cast on them the reproach of being venomous—a reproach which is now ascertained to be unjust. Indeed, the flesh of several kinds of toads affords as wholesome nutriment as that of frogs, and they are eaten with impunity by snakes and several large birds." And again he adds:—"The irritating nature of the fluid emitted by toads,

* "Cosmos"—a scientific journal published in Paris.

when frightened or disturbed, appears from the circumstance that dogs on seizing them are affected with a slight swelling of the mouth, accompanied by an increased secretion of saliva."

Much as I would like to clear up the character of my old friend, I am bound, in justice to him and to public safety, to admit that he is not the completely harmless creature kind-hearted naturalists represent him. Undoubtedly I would pity the man or woman who would faint at the sight of one, or even at its touch, but I would caution foolhardy young gentlemen from everything like bravado exploits with him. It is certainly safe to lay one on the hand provided it bears no wound; but let the angered creature inject a little of the matter from its rough skin into the slightest scratch or abrasion, and MM. Gratiolet and S. Cloeg will speak for the result.

"Popular tradition," says an English journal, recording the results of the experiments of these gentlemen, "has from time immemorial attached a poisonous influence to the toad, but enlightened opinion presumed that the idea was an ignorant prejudice. All doubt, however, as to the poisonous nature of the contents of the skin pustules has been set at rest by the recent experiments of two French philosophers, MM. Gratiolet and S. Cloeg, who, by inoculating various animals with the cutaneous poison of toads and salamanders, have demonstrated that the substance in question is endowed with well-marked and exceedingly dangerous qualities. The first experiment of these gentlemen was performed on a little African tortoise, which was inoculated with some of the toad-poison in one of its hinder feet; paralysis of the limb supervened, and still existed at the expiration of eight months, thus demonstrating the possibility of local poisoning by the agent. In order to determine whether the poisonous material spoiled by keeping, two gentlemen procured about twenty-nine grains of the poison on the 25th of April, 1851, and having placed it aside until the 16th of March, 1852, they inoculated a goldfinch with a little of this material. The bird almost immediately died. Subsequently, the investigators succeeded in eliminating the poisonous principle from the inert matters with which it is associated in the skin pustules, and they found that when thus purified, its effects were much more intense than before. Like most of the known very strong organic poisons, the active principle of the toad venom is alkaline in its character, almost insoluble in water, slightly soluble in ether, and very soluble in alcohol. MM. Gratiolet and S. Cloeg are at this time occupied in collecting a large amount of the toad venom, and will shortly make known the result of their further investigations, which are calculated, in the opinion of the investigators, to throw considerable light upon the nature and action of the poisons of hydrophobia, of serpents, of contagious diseases, and animal poisons generally." No doubt can, therefore, now be reasonably harboured of the toad's poisonous propensities, though it is hard to suppress an involuntary smile at the sanguine hopes of the experimenters. The toad is evidently, however, quite harmless if let alone, so that there is no plea for its wholesale destruction, as if it were a cobra capella. All that is necessary, is to avoid incautiously handling it.

Repulsive and unintelligent as the appearance of our subject undoubtedly is, he is not without strong instincts, whose workings would seem to be very nearly akin to the feats of reason. An amusing instance of this kind is related in the "Naturalist," for November of last year, by Mr. William Whytehead, of Risley, in Suffolk. A toad had got planted comfortably in a radish bed, where slugs were, of course, in plenty, to satisfy his appetite; he was frequently disturbed by members of the family and others, who removed him to other parts of the garden; but he as certainly returned to his own post, even through the barrier of a garden net, the meshes of which were but half the size of his body. That he actually did get through this difficulty was proved by observation; nicely illustrating how toads and men can overcome almost impossibilities by reducing the body. In order to test the extent of the toad's attachment to his chosen situation, Mr. Whytehead had it removed to a field some distance from the garden; but we will let him relate the incident in his own language. "The garden, which was large, was entirely walled round, excepting a small gate leading into another garden: this garden was also walled round, but there was a single hole under the outer door leading into a field. Behind the inner garden wall was a shrubbery, and into this we took the toad, little expecting to see it again. To our surprise, however, it was seated next day beneath the net. To reach this place, it must have gone through the fence of the shrubbery into a field, then through another fence into a second field, next through the hole under the outer garden, and, lastly, through the gate into the inner garden."

Public attention has from time to time been called to marvellous accounts of toads found in the hearts of trees, and inclosed in solid rocks, where they were supposed to have existed in a dormant state for centuries. Such marvels, however, are by no means so well authenticated as scientific observers would wish, and therefore are to be received with very great caution. Dr. Buckland performed experiments in order to determine the length of time which the toad would subsist without air or food, and found that death invariably occurred within twelve months, but that with an occasional supply of atmospheric air, life continued for a period of two years. The remarks of that gifted geologist on the subject are so much to the purpose, that we shall conclude this sketch with them. "The evidence," says he, "is never perfect to show that the reptiles were inclosed in a solid rock; no examination is ever made until the animal is first discovered by the breaking of the mass in which it was contained; and then it is too late to ascertain, without carefully replacing every fragment, (and in no case that I have seen reported, has this ever been done,) whether or not there was any hole or cavity by which the animal may have entered the place from which it was extracted. Without previous examination, it is almost impossible to prove that there was no such communication. In the case of rocks near the surface of the earth, and in stone quarries, reptiles find ready admission to holes and fissures." And again, he adds: "An individual which, when young, may have entered a cavity by some very

narrow aperture, would find abundance of food by catching insects, which, like itself, seek shelter within such cavities, and may soon have increased so much in bulk as to render it impossible to get out again through the narrow aperture at which it entered. A small hole of this kind is very likely to be overlooked by common workmen, who are the only people whose operations on wood and stone disclose cavities in the interior of such substances."

LORD CHESTERFIELD AND WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

THE most polished Englishman of the last century was Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield. High-born and well-bred, clever, eloquent, and witty, and endowed with a large amount of natural amenity, he was bent on distinction. To dazzle his contemporaries was the business of his life. He was a man who made his own model. From the speeches of Cicero, from the epigrams of Martial, from the saloons of Paris and Versailles, he gleaned the several ingredients of classic grace and modern refinement, and sought to combine them in the courtier, the statesman, and the orator. He had no God. In the shrine where the Most High should be, there was a dim outline which looked very like a colossal Stanhope carrying a young Chesterfield in its arms; but, unless this mixture of self-idolatry and son-worship deserve the name, there was no religion in the man. He had his reward. At a levee, or in a drawing-room, he moved, "the admired of all admirers." Few made such formidable speeches in parliament. None uttered so many brilliant sayings in society. He got ribbons, plaudits, diplomatic appointments, the smiles of the fair, the envy of his peers; everything except true human affection; everything except the approbation of God. Should any one wish to repeat the man, the mould is still extant. It will be found in Lord Chesterfield's "Letters to his Son;"—a book of which our great moralist said, in effect, that "it inculcates the morals of a profligate with the manners of a dancing-master." But before taking more trouble, it is well to know the result. At the close, he confessed that his life had been as joyless as it had been selfish and hollow: "I have recently read Solomon with a kind of sympathetic feeling. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not as wise as he; but now I am old enough to feel the truth of his reflection, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'" Repartees sparkled on his dying lips, but all was dreary within, all was darkness ahead. The flame for which he lived, expired before himself; and now truth declines to write his epitaph, and virtue has no garlands for his grave.

Still a boy, while this old worldling lay dying, William Wilberforce soon grew up, and the grace of God made him a Christian. That is, it taught him to live not to himself, but to the glory of God. It taught him to worship. It showed him that he was not his own proprietor; that he had no right to make his own enjoyment his chief pursuit; and that he must put all his faculties at God's disposal. In the Bible he found the model on which God would have him form his character. He studied it. He prayed over it. He watched himself, and

struggled with his evil tendencies. God's Spirit strengthened him, and gave him wonderful self-conquest. Retaining all his natural elasticity, his wit, his bright fancy, his melodious voice and fluent speech,—his random hilarity was exchanged for conscientious kindness, and all his gifts of mind and station were devoutly laid at the feet of his Redeemer. With his pen he expounded to the highest classes that system of vital piety which Whitefield and Wesley had already preached to the populace; and carrying it to the dinner-tables of Clapham, and the evening assemblies of Piccadilly, many who fancied religion too severe in the sermons of Bishop Porteus or the strictures of Hannah More, confessed to its loveliness in the life of Mr. Wilberforce. Then, in his public career—keeping himself on purpose "pure," avoiding office, never using for personal ends the vast ascendancy over others which his fascinating goodness gave him, any more than the *prestige* of his mighty Yorkshire constituency; alike on the floor of St. Stephen's and on the platform of Freemasons' Tavern—he consecrated to every humane and Christian cause "a persuasive and pathetic eloquence, chastened by a pure taste, varied by extensive information, enriched by classical allusion, sometimes elevated by the more sublime topics of holy writ—the thoughts and the spirit

'That touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire.'

How much the individual advocacy of one so loved and honoured effected for Missionary and Bible Societies, it would be difficult to tell; but it is hardly metaphor to say that Africa wept when he died. His country will never forget him: for although poets, warriors, and statesmen, in numbers repose under the roof of the Abbey, England recognises no originality more illustrious, no heroism more patriotic, than his who led the campaign of humanity so long, and who achieved the abolition of the slave trade.

The model on which Wilberforce was formed, still exists. The reader will find it in the book which we have sought to recommend; . . . but the book is not exhausted; and if you really wish to serve your fellows, this mentor will show you the way. With its guidance, you will find that the true "excelsior" is humility, and that, like Pascal, Edwards, and Vinet, the believer on his knees sees farther than the philosopher on tip-toe. You will find that the book, which, among its affectionate copyists, has yielded characters so distinct, yet so excellent, as Arnold and Buxton, Howard and Williams, Martyn and McChesney, can make you as superior to your present self, as these men were superior to ordinary mortals. In one word, you will find that in things intellectual, he is likely to be the mightiest master who knows the Bible best, and most meekly trusts in God; and in things moral and philanthropic—in conduct and character—he is likely to be the greatest original who is the closest copyist—the most implicit imitator of Christ.—*The Lamp and the Lantern.*

DEATH OR LIVE.—As for my death, I bless God I feel and find so much inward joy and comfort to my soul, that if it were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life, if it may stand with the holy will of God.—*Edward Deering.*

Varieties.

THE ARABS AND THE EXCAVATIONS IN THE EAST.—It is scarcely matter of surprise that the explorations which have been now for so many years carried on in eastern lands, should excite the mingled wonder and suspicion of the tribes inhabiting the sites of ancient empires. Mr. Layard, in the progress of his discoveries, met with several amusing instances of this curiosity on their part, one of which we will extract. When prosecuting his examinations at Niffer, in the southern part of Mesopotamia, he found that one of the sheikhs and his followers, under pretence of protecting him against any marauders, lingered watchfully near him, that they might be at hand in case of the discovery of treasures. "The sheikh believed, of course," says Mr. Layard, "that I was searching after gold. Agab knew so many authentic instances of enormous wealth having been dug up at Niffer, that it was useless to argue with him upon the subject. He related to me, in the usual expressive style of the Arabs, the following story:—In the time of Hatab, the uncle of Wadi, sheikh of the Zobeide, a muleteer of that tribe chanced to be at Damascus with his camels. As he was walking one day in the bazaar, an aged man accosted him. 'Oh, sheikh of the caravan!' said he, 'I know that thou art from the southern Jezireh, and from the land of the Zobeide. Allah be praised for sending thee to me! Now there is in that country a great mound, that marks the site of an ancient city of the unbelievers, called Niffer. Go, dig in the dry bed of the Shat-el-Neel, in the midst of the ruins, and thou wilt find a stone white as milk; bring it to me, and thou shalt have a reward double the usual hire for thy camels both there and back.' The camelier was at a great loss to guess how the old man knew of the stone; but he did as he had been asked, and in the place described to him he found the white stone, which was just a camel's burden. He took it to Damascus, and gave it to the sheikh, who paid him his just reward, and then broke the stone to pieces before him. It was, of course, according to the tradition, full of gold, and the philosopher had learnt where it was to be found in the books of the infidels."

ABD-EL-KADER.—This celebrated emir lives a very retired life at Broussa, in the bosom of his family, and occupies himself with the education of his children. His principal enjoyment in the day, and through a part of the night, is study and poetry, for which he has a decided *penchant*. Broussa pleases him so much as a place of residence that he has decided on purchasing a farm in the neighbourhood, in order to give employment to himself and the persons who compose his numerous suite. He is disgusted with grandeur. The conduct of the emir is always in keeping with his noble character, and he allows no opportunity to escape of loudly proclaiming the generosity and greatness of mind of the emperor of the French; and in his devotions he never fails to pray for the preservation of the life of him who restored him to liberty and repose. The emir is expecting to receive from Damascus two magnificent horses of the famous Arab breed, called Nedjdj, which are intended for the emperor Napoleon, to whom they have been already offered, and accepted by his majesty. —*Journal de Constantinople*.

THE KING OF BAVARIA A DEALER IN GAME.—The king of Bavaria derives a considerable portion of his revenues from the products of the forests in his dominions, and many are the large sporting parties formed for the supply of the royal market. The king also has an establishment, composed of large cool halls, where the game is kept for sale; and, as the price is lower than that of butcher's meat, it is easily disposed of. "I have often," says a recent traveller, "strolled through the establishment, and would strongly advise any traveller passing through Munich to do the same. He will see such a quantity of wild boar, red-deer, fallow-deer, and game of all sorts, as, I will venture to say, is not to be found in any other capital. Every animal killed on the crown lands, far or near, is sent to this building. On one occasion I saw, in addition to the game I speak of, a wolf and a very large eagle, besides other rare specimens of birds of prey. The superintendent was always kind enough to let me know when anything out of the common way had been sent in."

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEAL.—The African serpent in the Bristol Zoological Gardens, which is the largest snake in England, if not in Europe, took the other day, as his "Friday's capon," a large Cochins china cock, very fat and in full feather, weighing nearly, if not quite, fourteen pounds. After hearing that this is the same reptile which some time ago took a blanket as his dinner, our readers will be less surprised at this repast extraordinary. —*Bristol Gazette*.

A FORMIDABLE INTRUDER.—A disaster, attended with rather singular results, lately occurred at Workington, on the Whitehaven Junction railway. Some points, instead of closing after a train had passed through, remained open; a luggage-train, which followed, passed through the points, ran into a siding, smashed a wooden bulkhead, mounted the station platform, entered the station, and went almost through it before it came to a stand. Booking-office, porter's office, and two waiting-rooms were completely filled by the train, which smashed to pieces everything in its way. Fortunately, no one was in the place at the time, the station-master having escaped. The engine-driver and stoker leaped off in time; the guard, however, was slightly bruised.

READING AT LIGHTHOUSES.—Among the items of expenditure by the Trinity-house last year was one of 51*l*. 16*s*. 3*d*., "for reading-books for the use of the keepers of the lighthouses and crews of the light-vessels." This is a very pleasing fact.

HOW SOLDIERS ARE RAISED IN RUSSIA.—Letters from St. Petersburg state that, on a recent occasion, the Czar, having remarked that the number of men raised among the serfs in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg was smaller than in any part of his dominions, asked the reason. He was informed that the landowners round St. Petersburg were in the habit of permitting their serfs to take service in the capital, on paying a portion of their wages to their masters; so that, in point of fact, the majority of those registered in the neighbourhood were actually in the capital. Two days after, the gates of the city were closed, and a regular *razzia* was made on all the coachmen, footmen, etc., of St. Petersburg, a large proportion of whom were forthwith removed from their good places, and sent off to the army to fight the Turks. —*Newspaper Paragraph*.

ETIQUETTE IN CHINA.—Dr. Bowring, at a recent meeting in Liverpool, speaking of the customs of the Chinese, said:—"Certainly in that country there is much to learn; much, no doubt, we see there to avoid, but much we discover there which may instruct. You perhaps know that there is no lady in China, who aspires to a high position in her country, who does not look upon it as a great accomplishment and a great pleasure *not* to be able to walk. I have seen beautiful women carried to their marriage ceremonies on the backs of their slaves, wholly unable to walk from one end of a room to the other. I remember once travelling with a great mandarin in China, who said to me, 'Is it true that in your country there are ladies with great feet, who know how to behave themselves?' I replied that I knew many. He said, 'It is very curious indeed; we never get any of the sort in China.' Not long ago, an English lady, a friend of mine, was introduced into high society in Canton, and the Chinese ladies, not having seen an Englishwoman before, were very curious to look at her feet. They said, 'It is very strange; she has very good manners; what a wonder it is that such a savage as that should be able to behave herself in good society. Look at her great feet! What could her father and mother be thinking of to let her grow to this size, and to let her feet grow with her person?' One of the Chinese ladies observed, 'To be sure, she knows how to behave herself; but you know she has been in our company for some time in Canton.' That is a trait of Chinese barbarism."

CATTLE IN THE LAND OF THE COSSACKS.—So abundant is the supply of cattle in the regions of the Don, from the excellence of the grazing land, that multitudes of animals are killed merely for the sake of the tallow which they afford, and the meat itself, for which so many thousands elsewhere are hungering, is buried in the earth.